2007–2008

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

Saskatchewan Community Resources

Minister's Message

I am pleased to present the Performance Plan for Saskatchewan Community Resources for 2007-08.

Community Resources reorganized in February 2006 when career and employment services merged with Advanced Education and Employment, and early learning and child care merged with Learning. Our vision, principles, goals and mandate, however, remain largely unchanged. Details of the reorganization are outlined within this Plan, but I want to highlight here two new objectives we have added that better align our organization's actions and outcomes with our priorities and direction.

One of the new objectives more adequately reflects our extensive housing role and identifies the specific, strategic outcomes we expect of our housing programs. Quality and affordable housing is essential for independence and participation in families and in communities, cornerstones of Community Resources' strategic plan.

The other new objective addresses our general delivery system and articulates our upcoming efforts to improve the way we deliver our services and to meet the needs for financial accountability and effectiveness in delivery across all of our programs.

Community Resources plays such an important role for all Saskatchewan people with our focus on building strong families, creating paths to independence and encouraging inclusion. In the coming year, we will further this work of helping vulnerable families and individuals break down the barriers that hold them back from independence and participation in their families and communities. This Plan provides more detail on the key actions we intend to take to achieve this. We are committed to completing these key actions, and will report on progress in the Department's Annual Report, July 2008.

Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Who We Are

With about 2,200 employees and a budget of more than $600 million, Community Resources is one of the largest departments in the Saskatchewan government. The Department also provides management for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), a provincial crown corporation with a budget of about $275 million and a portfolio of over 30,000 housing units. Community Resources strives to provide an array of programs to help low-income people and families build greater social and economic independence.

VISION

Saskatchewan people, regardless of differences in needs and circumstances, have opportunities to contribute and be included in the economic and social life of the province.

MANDATE

Community Resources works with citizens as they build better lives for themselves through economic independence, strong families and active involvement in the labour market and the community. We invest in positive outcomes for people in areas of income support, child and family services, supports for persons with disabilities and affordable housing.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Most department programs are delivered through five regional offices and 22 local service centres. This regional approach allows programs and services to be delivered locally, with sensitivity to local conditions. Similarly, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is focusing on better service and integration with local housing authorities and community agencies. SHC operates housing offices serving four geographic regions, including the north.

Community Resources also relies heavily on hundreds of community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver programs and services on our behalf. These independent organizations form an integral part of the human services chain by addressing local issues and needs. Services range from group homes for people with disabilities to mobile crisis units and meal programs for low-income children. CBOs help people to build independence, participate in their communities and enjoy improved quality of life.

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

In 1997, the Department launched its Building Independence strategy that began the process of fundamentally redesigning social assistance. New programs were introduced that built upon existing programs and the Department's enhanced accountability measures. Programs are delivered regionally through income assistance workers and through a central Contact Centre. These programs provide additional income and health benefits, and help improve the quality of life for low-income working families. The programs include:

- The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, a monthly payment that adds to income from a job, farming, self-employment, or from child or spousal support;
- The Saskatchewan Child Benefit, a monthly benefit that assists lower-income families with the cost of raising children. This monthly allowance is paid to eligible families for each child under the age of 18 years;
- Family Health Benefits, administered by Saskatchewan Health, which helps reduce the costs of health services for children. Families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement or the Saskatchewan Child Benefit automatically qualify for Family Health Benefits;
- The Provincial Training Allowance, administered by Advanced Education and Employment, which provides income support for adult learners enrolled in bridging programs, helping them to make the transition into jobs;
- Jobs First links new social assistance applicants who are able to work with job opportunities as a first option. Jobs First is delivered by Advanced Education and Employment;
- The Transitional Employment Allowance which provides short-term benefits to people participating in the Jobs First program, as well as those making the transition to employment or some other source of income; and,
- Child Care subsidies which are available to low-income families who use licensed child care.

These programs can help families leave social assistance for jobs. They also provide peace of mind that the move to independence will not jeopardize their children's health or the family's economic stability.

The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) is a program of last resort for families and individuals who for various reasons, including disability, illness, unemployment or low income cannot meet their basic needs. Any person who is in financial need may apply for the program.

Initial application to the range of the Department's financial assistance programs is through a central, telephone-based Contact Centre located in Regina. The Centre serves as the first point of contact for low-income citizens seeking income support from the Department. Once eligibility is determined, participants on SAP are assigned a worker in their region who develops with them a case plan and works to reduce barriers to their independence.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Department provides targeted support programs and services to at-risk children, youth and families. It also supports child welfare services to protect children from abuse and neglect. In addition, regional staff provide care, supervision, assessment and treatment for children in the Minister's care. The Department continues to develop new programs, services and resources to support families at risk and prevent crisis situations that require child welfare interventions.

Department programs help children, youth and families to become healthy, independent members of the community. Programs and services are designed to protect children from abuse and neglect, and preserve and strengthen the family unit. The main program areas include:

- Child protection, including family support services;
- Targeted support services, including Teen and Young Parent Program and family violence services;
- Services for children and youth who cannot reside in their family home and are in the care of the Minister;
- Foster care, provided by families in the community, for children who cannot live with their own families for a period of time;
- Adoption and post-care services, including Domestic Adoption Program, which is adoption of a child who is permanently in the care of the Minister of Saskatchewan Community Resources, and the Assisted Adoption Program for adoptive families who are interested in the challenge of parenting children who have special needs and are in the care of the Minister of Community Resources prior to adoption;
- Post Adoption Services in Saskatchewan which refers to the disclosure of information following a legal adoption. Post adoption services may include provision of non-identifying background information, copies of legal documents, and search and contact services; and,
- The Child Nutrition and Development Program which involves government and communities working in partnership to support nutritious meal programs and nutrition education programs.

The Department also has agreements with 18 First Nations, which give authority to First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies to deliver child welfare services to children and families living on reserve.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Through the Community Living Division (CLD), the Department helps individuals who have intellectual disabilities to live and work in their communities. Staff work in partnership with other government departments and about 100 community-based organizations to create and maintain support structures for individuals to live as independently and normally as possible. Some services are provided directly to individuals and their families by department staff, however most programs are delivered through an extensive community-based, residential and day program delivery system. The Department also provides:

- community-based social work case management support to approximately 3,300 people with intellectual disabilities;
- program development consultant services;
- family support services including respite and early childhood intervention programs; and,
- developmental and functional life skills services, such as activity centres and sheltered workshops.

The Community Living Division also operates Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw, which provides long-term care for people with severe intellectual disabilities. Valley View serves adults whose needs cannot currently be met within the community.

The province's Office of Disability Issues (ODI), established in 1998, is hosted by Community Resources. ODI serves as both a focal point for provincial government initiatives on disability policy and a single point of entry for anyone seeking information or assistance regarding disability policy, programs and services.

Communities Working Together: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities provides a framework for supporting individuals with cognitive disabilities who have significant behavioural and developmental challenges. The new funding targets children and youth with cognitive disabilities primarily between the ages of six and 24 years whose needs are not being met through existing services and supports in their community.

Community Resources also provides $2 million annually for long-term employment supports for persons with disabilities as part of the Building Independence initiative.

HOUSING

Community Resources, through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, promotes self-sufficiency and independence through the provision of housing and housing services for families, seniors and others who could not otherwise afford safe, secure shelter.

The SHC portfolio of nearly 30,000 housing units is spread throughout 330 Saskatchewan communities. The majority of housing units are managed locally, with the SHC managing about three per cent of the portfolio. Local housing authorities manage nearly 60 per cent of the units, with the remainder managed through agreements with non-profit and co-operative groups.

SHC maintains operating agreements with more than 450 organizations, including local housing authorities, housing co-operatives, non-profit agencies, and private landlords. The Corporation complements the work of the private sector housing industry by making housing more accessible to modest-income Saskatchewan people. Over 1,500 volunteers support the effort of housing authorities in Saskatchewan.

The Department offers programs which help make affordable housing available to low to moderate income households. They include:

- Centenary Affordable Housing Program, a cost-shared program with the federal government and municipalities to help make affordable homeownership and rental units available to low-and-moderate income households;
- Social and affordable rental programs that provide low rental housing and rent geared to income housing for eligible individuals and families;
- Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services which support low-income tenants living in senior social housing to use community-based services to maintain their independence;
- Saskatchewan Emergency Repair Program, the Saskatchewan Home Adaptations for Independence Program, and the Saskatchewan Rental Repair Program, which are targeted to low-income homeowners and landlords to make repairs for the safe occupancy of a home or to enable occupants to make adaptations that would allow them to continue living in their home;
- Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program that provides financial assistance to low and moderate income homeowners and rental property owners, to make energy efficiency retrofits that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make housing more affordable; and,
- Affordable Housing Trust and Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust, funded by the federal government to support capital investments and increase the supply of affordable housing.

In 2004, the Department introduced HomeFirst. It is a five-year strategy that is contributing, with the support and co-operation of all levels of government and communities, $161 million for housing supply programs and about $20 million for a housing supplement for low to moderate-income families and persons with disabilities. A $100 million housing, skills training, and inner city revitalization program was announced in February 2007. This package of initiatives includes $60 million for:

- fair expansion of HomeFirst, providing affordable housing for 500 more low to moderate income families in the inner cities and northern communities;
- rent subsidies for 300 very low income families; and,
- a training component to link youth to the home building and repair sector.

CENTRAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The Department's regional staff and programs are supported by a central office with divisions and branches specializing in human resources, budgeting, policy analysis, research and intergovernmental relations. The major program areas are supported by four program divisions that provide policy and program direction: the Income Assistance Division, the Child and Family Services Division, the Housing Division and the Community Living Division.

Plan at a Glance

This is the first Performance Plan released by the new Department of Community Resources. It builds on plans that were released earlier by the previous Department of Community Resources and Employment.

The Plan contains goals and objectives that are multi-year in nature, as well as a series of key actions to be undertaken in 2007-08. The key actions will advance the Department in meeting its objectives, while the performance measures will help the Department and public alike in gauging progress towards the goals.

Changes to the Performance Plan arising from the government reorganization in February 2006 are described in a later section of this Plan. The Department will report on the actual results of this Plan in the Annual Report of July 2008.

The 2007-08 Plan proposes a balanced set of actions that will advance the social and economic well-being of the province's less advantaged citizens.

GOAL 1

Economic independence and self-reliance

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Low-income people are ready to take advantage of opportunities for employment and other productive roles*

Performance Measures

- Social assistance beneficiaries (SAP and TEA) as a percentage of the provincial population 0 to 64 years of age
- The number of households receiving the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) or the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA); and the number of SAP and TEA beneficiaries
- The proportion of new welfare households (SAP and TEA) who leave the program in six months or less

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Low-income working people can meet their financial needs and maintain their financial independence*

Performance Measures

- The number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES)
- Number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement
- Number of families receiving child care subsidies

OBJECTIVE 3 – *Client dignity, independence and prospects for greater independence are preserved in last-resort programs*

Performance Measure

- **Relationship of financial assistance benefits to standardized low-income or poverty measures**

GOAL 2

Inclusion in families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Families have strong capacities to care for and support family members*

Performance Measures

- **The number of child protection families served by the Department**
- **The proportion of extended family placements versus other out-of-home placements for children**
- **Number of families using respite**

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Children whose parents are unable to care for them receive high-quality out-of-home care*

Performance Measures

- **The number of children in care of the Minister**
- **The per cent of foster homes where practitioner level training has been completed**

OBJECTIVE 3 – *Residential services provide the highest possible quality of life*

Performance Measures

- **Under development**

OBJECTIVE 4 – *People with disabilities live more independently and participate more fully in the economy and communities*

Performance Measures

- The percentage of persons with disabilities receiving employment supports or programs who obtain or maintain employment
- The number of persons with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View Centre to community residential alternatives
- The number of persons with intellectual disabilities living in own residences with minimal life skills support through Community Living funded supportive living programs

OBJECTIVE 5 – *People have safe and affordable homes that promote strong communities and neighbourhoods*

Performance Measures

- The number of affordable housing units developed under the Centenary Affordable Housing Program (CAHP) and other housing programs
- The number of households assisted through repair, renovation, and adaptation programs
- The per cent of homes that upgraded to safety standards after initially failing the housing inspection for the Saskatchewan Housing Rental Supplement (SHRS)

The following objective supports both department goals.

OBJECTIVE – *All programs and services improve client outcomes, are financially accountable, and are delivered effectively*

Performance Measures

- Income assistance benefit measures
- Contact Centre service measures
- Number of children in care files with an updated Child Assessment and Development Plan (CADP) completed within 120 days
- Per cent of child protection investigations that are fully completed within 15 days of report

2007-08 Financial Overview

Saskatchewan Community Resources will spend $625.414 million to deliver its programs and services throughout the province. The following outlines the 2007-08 appropriation for direct program delivery and grants to third parties.

2007-08 ESTIMATES	*(in thousands of dollars)*
Employment and Income Assistance	$ 310,677
Housing	26,812
Regional Service Delivery	64,373
Community Living	99,480
Central Management and Services and Office of Disability Issues	35,828
Child and Family Services	88,244
Total Appropriation	$ 625,414
Capital Acquisitions	(1,900)
Amortization	1,695
Total Expense	$ 625,209
Revenues	$ 21,583
FTE Staff Complement	1,985.5

Trends and Issues

Community Resources provides services for citizens in areas of income support, child and family services, support services for people with disabilities and affordable housing. People receiving services tend to have barriers that limit their ability to participate fully in the economic and social life of the province. Major barriers include:

- lack of education or skills needed for employment;
- lack of access to affordable, safe housing as a base for employment and children's success;
- limited child care choices for low-income parents to work or attend school or training; and,
- discrimination in the workforce due to race, ethnicity or disability.

LABOUR MARKET TRENDS

A healthy and growing economy is crucial to reducing poverty. Without jobs and employment opportunities, people have no avenue to move out of low income. Generally those on social assistance have lower levels of education, and are therefore limited in the types of jobs they can occupy. As the demand for jobs at the lower end of the labour market (low pay, low skill) expand and contract, social assistance caseloads inversely fall or rise.

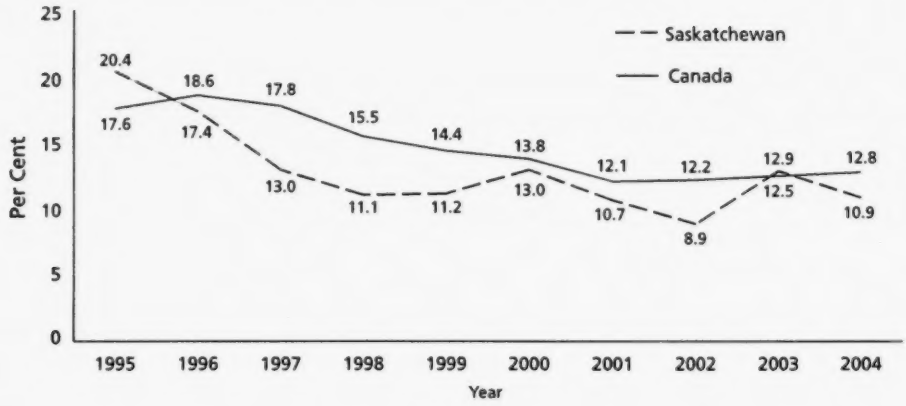
Projections are that the number of jobs in the province will continue to grow. This is starting to result in a shortage of people to fill jobs. This was seen in the Spring of 2006 when the number of job postings on the SaskJobs website hit all time high numbers. Many jobs are still within reach for those on social assistance and those who were previously not successful in the job market.

Job growth, however, is not evenly spread throughout the province. For the benefits of economic expansion to be felt on department caseloads, job growth, and jobs of the right type, need to be created in all areas of the province.

LOW INCOME

Most people who use the services offered by Community Resources do so because they are poor or near poor. Income assistance programs – SAP, TEA, SES, child care subsidies and housing supplements – all provide additional income to those who have few financial resources. Assuming constant take-up rates, any increases in the number of individuals or families who are poor will lead to increases in the Department's caseloads. Since there are more programs that target poor families, increases in the incidence and/or depth of poverty among families will have a particularly large impact on department costs and caseloads.

CHILDREN UNDER LICO (AFTER TAX), 1995 TO 2004



Among some families, poverty is an intergenerational problem. There is a small number of people who grew up in welfare-dependent families and now, as adults, have remained on welfare. Reducing the persistence of poverty, that is, the length of time that people remain poor, can reduce the intergenerational transmission of welfare dependency.

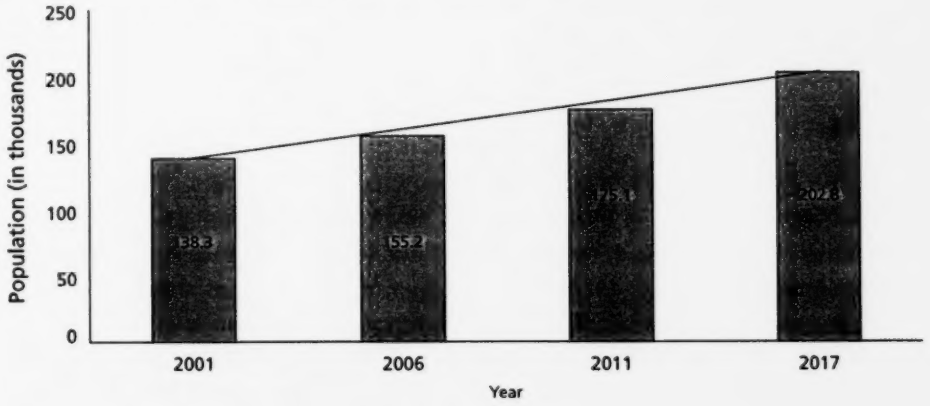
EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education is one of the major determinants of employability, employment and the level of income one receives from work. Over the years, minimum education required for most jobs has risen. Department clients tend to have lower levels of education, and are more limited in the types of jobs they seek. As the number of higher end jobs in the province grows, those with lower levels of education will increasingly be left behind and unable to compete in the labour market.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

A disproportionately large number of Aboriginal persons use public social services. While around 15 per cent of the provincial population is of Aboriginal background, over 40 per cent of people using income assistance programs, and nearly two thirds of families involved in child protection, are Aboriginal. Without changes in the conditions under which Aboriginal people often live – low income, poor housing, discrimination, family instability – the high use of public services will likely continue. Unless the social and economic conditions affecting Aboriginal people change, rising populations will likely result in increased demand for human services.

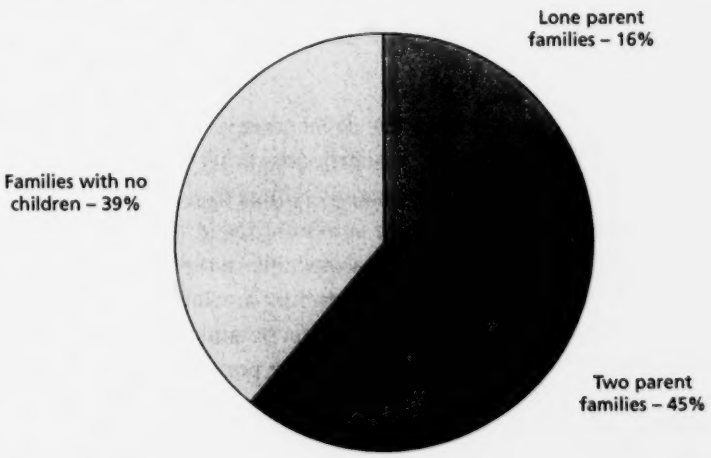
SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2001 TO 2017



FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Changes in the composition and ages of households have an impact on the demand for services provided by the Department. A common element among households using social services is that they are poor. Single earner households have less ability to generate income and are disproportionately recipients of income assistance. This is particularly the case if the single earner is female. Young families with children struggle with the dual challenges of having enough income to support the family and child rearing. As a result, young families tend to dominate the caseloads of child protection services.

TYPES OF FAMILIES, IN SASKATCHEWAN, 2005



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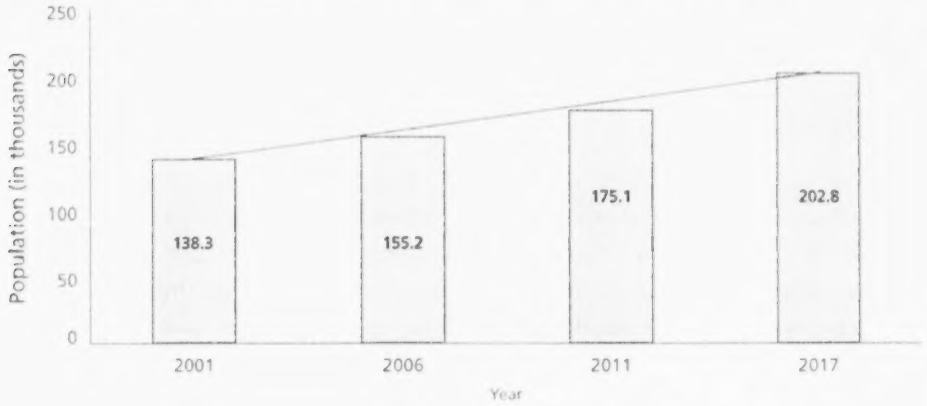

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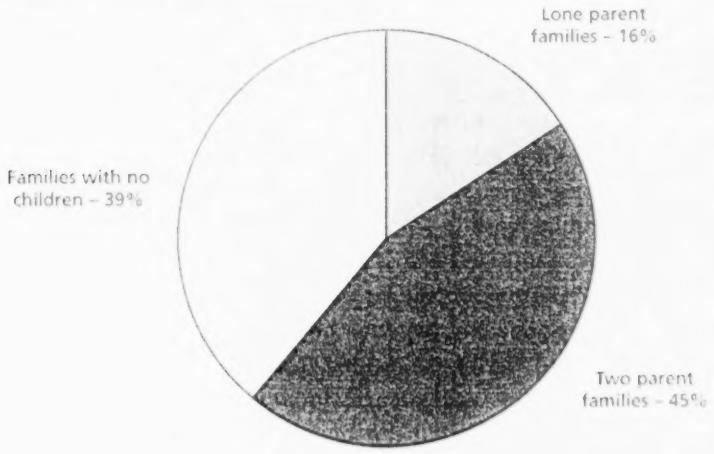


The increase in female single parent families may increase demand of services, particularly those related to income assistance and income supplementation for specific expenditures, such as housing and child care.

DISABILITY ISSUES

Persons with disabilities are often socially and economically marginalized in society. This makes them disproportionately heavy users of human services. While the size of the population of people with disabilities has not changed, social attitudes and legal protections to promote their inclusion in the community have changed. As well, community organizations supporting the rights of people with disabilities have become more active and influential in affecting public policy and programs to accommodate the needs of the disabled. This puts pressure on existing services to become more accessible and responsive to peoples' needs, and to more directly address the impact of a person's disability on their ability to work and be a contributing member of the community.

HOUSING TRENDS

Housing is the single largest expense in a household budget. It alone accounts for 30 per cent of the items that comprise the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Increases in the components of housing (rent, utilities) pose particular problems for those on fixed incomes, who must reallocate expenses to housing from some other type of expenditures, such as food or clothing.

Changes in shelter costs chiefly affect the Housing and Income Assistance areas of the Department. As a home builder and landlord, the Department is affected by increases in utility costs and housing replacement costs, as these affect rental prices and the overall costs of constructing housing units. Increases in rents and utilities also put pressure on the Department to raise benefit levels in order to maintain a basic standard of living for those dependent on income assistance programs.

The most serious housing needs in the province are concentrated in specific geographic locations including the North and inner city neighbourhoods. Inner city areas of major urban centers have higher concentrations of rental housing, dwellings in need of major repair and older housing stock. A population increase in some communities in northern Saskatchewan has increased the number of people urgently in need of affordable housing, which includes many families with children. In northern communities, with limited available housing, households are forced to either double-up or accept housing that may be substandard, resulting in overcrowded and sometimes inadequate and unsafe living conditions. The population base, size, and remote location of many communities pose serious challenges to housing development. Most northern communities have a limited or non-existing housing market, and often, traditional banking and mortgage lending is not available.

Changes from the Past Performance Plan

In February 2006, the government reorganized programs and services in several departments. Included in the reorganization were programs delivered by this Department that subsequently became part of the array of programs within the new Departments of Learning and Advanced Education and Employment (AEE). Specifically, career and employment services were merged with other adult education and job creation programs in AEE, while early learning and child care programs and funding for *KidsFirst* were merged with other early child development programs in Learning. As a result, some parts of the Department's performance plan needed to change. The Department took advantage of this opportunity to reflect on its existing strategic plan and consider the extent to which it was still relevant to the issues facing the Department and whether it adequately represented the Department's current priorities and direction. This review has resulted in the re-wording of several objectives in our current plan to make them clearer and more focused. It has also led to a re-consideration of several performance measures as to their relevance and meaningfulness for reporting on activities and outcomes.

The Department's vision, principles and goals remain unchanged. The mandate also remains the same, though there have been small changes to more accurately reflect the program areas in which the Department has responsibilities.

The Department's two goals are not independent of each other. Economic independence and inclusion in families and communities are part of the same dynamic relationship that helps people become productive citizens, parents and community members. Economic independence and financial stability are important preconditions for participating in one's community, and for creating a healthy supportive family life. The reverse, however, is also true. A healthy family and social environment is an important enabler to work and to meet the demands of the workplace. When families are in crisis, or there is no assured predictability in one's personal and social life, then employment and labour force participation also become tenuous. Major department programs, such as housing, clearly contribute to both goals of social and economic well-being of department clients.

Changes to the objectives took out ambiguous wording and have resulted in a more precise wording of their intent. The objectives are also more oriented to the outcomes we wish to achieve. In particular, they describe the type of outcome for clients expected from the program or service direction that the Department is pursuing. Two new objectives have been added, dealing with housing programs and the Department's internal administration and delivery of programs and services generally. The new housing objective was added because previous versions of the Performance Plan did not adequately reflect the objectives of the Department's extensive housing role. In the past, housing activities fell under several different objectives, but were not well aligned with them.

Another new objective deals with the Department's delivery system more generally, and is not tied to a specific program or service. It is an objective that addresses the needs for financial accountability and effectiveness in delivery across all programs. These concepts had been implicitly assumed by previous versions of the performance plan. However, since considerable effort in the coming years will be devoted to improvements to central, regional and client delivery systems, a specific objective in this area was deemed important.

Several performance measures have been changed. The Department will no longer report on performance measures relating to child care activities or the employment outcomes of EI recipients as these programs are the responsibility of the departments of Learning and Advanced Education and Employment, respectively. An annual review of the Department's performance measures will occur in order to ensure that the Department is able to demonstrate progress towards its strategic goals and directions.

Trendline information is provided for performance measures for the first time in the 2007-08 Performance Plan.

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

This section provides more information on the Department's strategic plan, the rationale guiding the plan, and measures for assessing the performance of department activities supporting the plan. The Department's strategic plan is oriented around six guiding principles:

- Citizens have a right to opportunities for economic and social inclusion, and a responsibility to participate and contribute within their capacities.
- Citizens need a productive role in life that provides the opportunity to contribute to their own well-being, to families, to communities, and to the province.
- Citizenship for all people is a shared responsibility and is achieved through partnerships among individuals, families, communities and governments.
- Sustainable social policy reflects widely shared values, is developed through open dialogue with clients, stakeholders and the public, and relies on the best available evidence of what works.
- Programs and services should be as minimally intrusive as possible to achieve desired objectives.
- The Department of Community Resources is accountable to government and the public for the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs and services.

Approximately half of the Department's total expenditure is for income support. The various programs that provide financial assistance to low-income people are demand-driven. If people have a need, and meet the eligibility requirements, they automatically receive benefits. As programs of last resort, there is no quota or rationing of who can participate. This means that much of the Department's caseload and expenditures are directly related to external factors, such as the health of the Canadian and provincial economies, local labour market conditions, population health and unemployment rates. Activities of other orders of government, such as changes to the interest rate, will affect Saskatchewan's labour market, employment and poverty rates. These external factors were examined in the 2007-08 environmental scan and considered in developing this plan.

The Department serves primarily a low-income clientele, and any activities that lead to an increase in unemployment will have a major effect on the demand for services and department expenditures. This plan is based on assumptions that Saskatchewan will not face an economic downturn in 2007-08, but rather, the economic growth that has occurred over the past years will continue. The plan also assumes no loss in revenues from major federal-provincial cost-sharing or social transfer programs.

While the child poverty rate in Saskatchewan is declining, the public and key stakeholders continue to be concerned with this issue. The Department continues to play an active role nationally in reducing child poverty through a number of comprehensive programs and services. Partnerships with the federal government such as the National Child Benefit will continue to be important in addressing child poverty. Any change in the federal commitment to these initiatives, however, could lead to a reversal of the declining child poverty rates.

Many program outcomes, particularly ones that involve child, family or community well-being, are complex and difficult to measure. Performance measures in the current plan use available data and are a mix of process and outcome measures. Where it is not possible to report directly on the effectiveness of specific programs, activity level measures have been used.

The Department's two goals are *Economic independence and self-reliance*, and *Inclusion in families and communities*. These refer to a person's economic and social well-being. These concepts are intertwined, as a basic level of economic security is required for a person to participate fully in their family and community. Similarly, people who are secure in their social relations are better able to work and contribute to the economic life of their community.

Though the two goals are two sides of a person's well-being, they are presented separately below, for ease of presentation and for format consistency with the Performance Plans presented by other departments.

GOAL 1

Economic independence and self-reliance

The following three objectives serve both department goals, though their primary effect is through influencing the economic circumstances of families and individuals.

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Low-income people are ready to take advantage of opportunities for employment and other productive roles*

Within the past year, department activities have shifted from delivering a broad range of employment related services through Career and Employment Centres, to more targeted employment supports. The main role of employment supports is with respect to people who are low-income – people receiving assistance from SAP or TEA or who may be weakly connected to the labour force. The Department no longer maintains a direct link with employers, as this role is now fulfilled elsewhere in government by Advanced Education and Employment. What Community Resources can do is prepare people for job search and skills training activities which are a necessary prelude for employment.

Inevitably, there are some who, through disability or incapacity, are not able to take on paid employment, either temporarily or permanently. For these people productive activities still exist outside of the labour force and every effort is made to afford the occasion to be productive and contribute in various ways to their family and community.

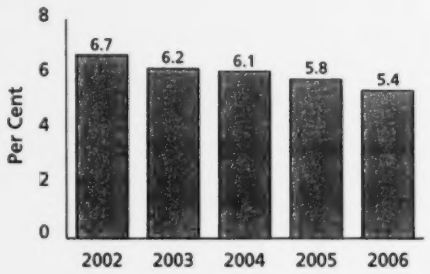
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Enhance services to link social assistance clients more quickly and effectively to jobs.

What are we measuring?

Social assistance beneficiaries (SAP and TEA) as a percentage of the provincial population 0 to 64 years of age

Progress to date



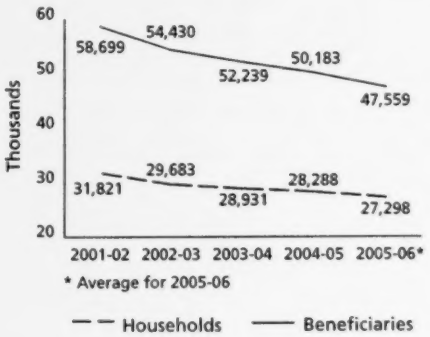
This measures the social assistance dependency rate. The rate of social assistance use is a global measure of people's ability to find and obtain employment. This measure, however, is affected by many other external trends, so needs to be interpreted in context to other social, economic and demographic factors, such as unemployment rates, and population growth. If reliance on social assistance is declining, holding economic and demographic conditions constant, this is an indicator of progress in increasing labour market attachment for persons with barriers to employment.

The measure is calculated as the yearly average number of provincial social assistance beneficiaries (SAP and TEA programs) as a percentage of the total provincial population aged 0 to 64 years. At March 31, 2006 the estimated monthly average of SAP and TEA beneficiaries was 47,559. The provincial population of people less than 64 years of age at July 1, 2005 was 873,247, resulting in a value of 5.4 per cent.

What are we measuring?

The number of households receiving the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) or the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA); and the number of SAP and TEA beneficiaries

Progress to date



The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and the Transitional Employment Allowance are last-resort income supports for people who have no other alternatives. A reduction in the number of those dependent on these programs is an indication of fewer people requiring assistance and is generally taken to be an indicator of better outcomes, including employment, for low-income people in Saskatchewan.

The measure is calculated as a monthly average over a period of 12 months. Over the past year both the number of households and the number of beneficiaries has declined.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
The proportion of new welfare households (SAP and TEA) who leave the program in six months or less	55% *[2006]*

Income assistance is often a bridge for people between spells of employment. The rate at which people are able to exit welfare is a measure of how well they are able to find and take up opportunities for employment. This measure is a function of both the services provided by the Department and the job opportunities available to people. Department staff play an important role in this, through counselling, referral and assisting individuals in their search for work. This measure is also affected by the strength of the labour market and the demand for the jobs of varying skill levels. The measure is based on all heads of household who entered SAP or TEA at the beginning of the year (January) and who did not receive any assistance in the sixth month after entry.

OBJECTIVE 2 – Low-income working people can meet their financial needs and maintain their financial independence

For many people it is difficult to leave social assistance. Minimum wage and part-time income by itself are not always sufficient to make people fully independent. There is a cost to working, both in terms of extra expenditures (e.g., child care, transportation, clothing) as well as in foregone benefits and services. These create disincentives to work and barriers to leaving assistance. In past years the government's Building Independence initiative has created additional financial supports outside of the social assistance system, so that the transition to employment is as smooth as possible without people losing benefits for themselves or their children. This objective addresses the importance of these financial supports that help cover essential costs of working and that inhibit low-income people from seeking work. The objective addresses the actions of the Department to prevent people who are at the economic margin from losing ground and losing their financial independence.

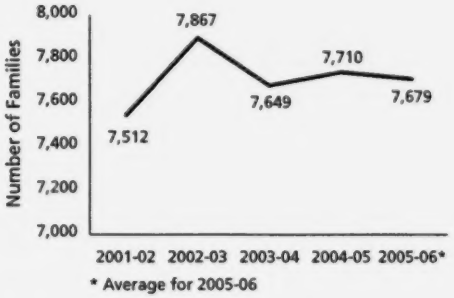
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Increase the income threshold of the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) to account for inflation.
- Increase access to the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement by 10 per cent.
- Increase access to the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS) by 10 per cent.

What are we measuring?

The number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES)

Progress to date



The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) was introduced in 1998 to help low-income working parents with child-related costs of employment. Participation in this program indicates those families who are better off due to having employment income supplemented by this benefit. The performance measure may be influenced by several factors, including the health of the labour market at the lower end of the income scale, and the visibility and accessibility of the program to low-income earners.

This measure is based on the monthly average number of families receiving SES payments.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
Number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement	2,400 *[2005-06 average]*

For low-income families, housing costs often consume a high percentage of their family income. The Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement was designed to ameliorate the effect of rental costs for those families where costs are high relative to their income. Increases in the take up of this supplement signify those families who are better able to meet their financial needs through the housing supplement.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of families receiving child care subsidies (new measure)	3,375 *[2005-06 average]*

Child care is a necessary expense for working families with young children. The child care subsidy covers a portion of the parents' costs of care. The subsidy is scaled to income so that lower income families have a higher proportion of their fees covered through the program. Increases in the take up of the program indicates those working families who are financially better off through having a portion of their child care covered by the subsidy.

OBJECTIVE 3 *– Client dignity, independence and prospects for greater independence are preserved in last-resort programs*

Several department programs provide services when no other options remain. These programs are often considered as social safety nets that establish basic minimum thresholds for income or care and ensure that no one in society falls below those levels. Some of the Department's income assistance, child welfare and institutional services can be considered to be last resorts.

The intent of this objective is to ensure that people using these services are treated as citizens; that the services are provided in a professional and respectful manner; and that despite the clients' current condition there are opportunities and supports provided that allow them to move out of those circumstances.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Improve the income adequacy of people receiving SAP and TEA. Increase the SAP basic allowance and the TEA general living allowance by $10/month. Increase the personal living allowance for people living in residential care homes by $5/month.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Relationship of financial assistance benefits to standardized low-income or poverty measures	Under development

When living costs rise, without an associated adjustment to financial assistance benefits, individuals and families become relatively worse off. Their decreased purchasing power puts them at a further disadvantage and hinders prospects for greater independence and well-being. This measure examines the relationship between financial benefits available to families, and standard measures of low income. The measure permits analysis of the extent to which government benefits change with respect to established social minimums.

GOAL 2

Inclusion in families and communities

The following five objectives serve both of the Department's goals, though their effect is, in the first instance, aimed at strengthening family and community relationships, and ensuring the personal safety and well-being of children and youth.

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Families have strong capacities to care for and support family members*

This objective recognizes the role of the Department's services and programs in building families' capacities to look after themselves. Conditions such as low income, disability, family violence and addictions limit an individual's capacity to fully function in society and care for others in the family. Department programs and community partners seek to overcome the impact of these circumstances through providing income, parent education, respite, family and housing supports. Through these supports, families are able to remain together with family members caring for one another in such a way as to develop healthy and strong children, youth, and families.

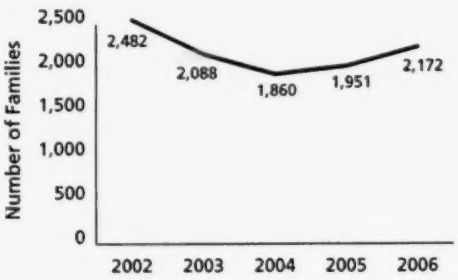
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Evaluate impact of the new respite program.
- Full implementation of the redesigned respite benefit for families with children with intellectual disabilities.
- Where appropriate, divert vulnerable families from child protection intervention to targeted community-based programs.
- Support the care of children-at-risk by placing them with extended family or other persons of sufficient interest, as a priority for out-of-home care.

What are we measuring?

The number of child protection families served by the Department

Progress to date



Though this is a 'negative' measure, in that it counts instances where parents may lack the capacity to adequately protect their children, it nonetheless reflects changes in the number of children who are at risk. When a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, the Department is required to conduct an investigation into the circumstances and conditions surrounding the child and his/her family. Depending on the circumstances, Department staff may seek to help the parents safely care for their children by referring parents or children to appropriate agencies, or supporting the family through temporary placements of parent aides. A measure on child protection families can inform the Department of supports that are required to protect and support the growth and development of children, youth and families. Increases in this measure would suggest that more families are struggling to properly care and provide for the safety of their children. This may be due to overall societal changes, or breakdowns in community and other supports for families.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
The proportion of extended family placements versus other out-of-home placements for children	38% *[March 2006]* 37% *[March 2005]* 34% *[March 2004]*

Foster care has been the traditional placement resource for a child requiring out-of-home care. This measure indicates the Department's success at extended family placements that maintain a closer link between the child and family.

This measure is calculated as the number of extended family placements over the number of other types of out-of-home placements (e.g., group homes, private treatment homes, foster homes) for children at March 31 of each fiscal year.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
Number of families using respite	Under development

Respite permits families, who have children with challenging intellectual and behavioural disabilities, to obtain temporary assistance in caring for their child. The program enables the parent to spend additional time with other family members, and to engage in other family and household activities that are normally not possible due to the intensive care required by the child with the disability. Respite provides that extra support that allows children to remain at home and be cared for by family members.

OBJECTIVE 2 – Children whose parents are unable to care for them receive high-quality out-of-home care

At times, it is necessary to protect a child from abuse or neglect by removing the child from his or her home. These events are extremely difficult for all concerned and can create permanent emotional or behavioural scars. To minimize the disruption and potential for longer lasting problems, the new placement should be of as high a quality as possible, including a safe and secure environment with people who care for the child and are sensitive and knowledgeable about the environment from which the child has come.

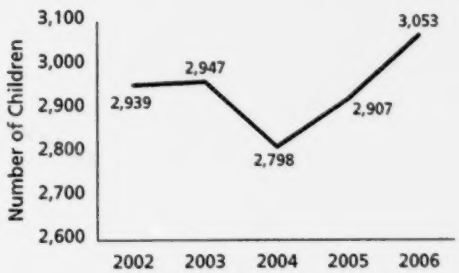
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Ensure a protective response to sexually exploited children and youth by expanding the service continuum including new stabilization, assessment and transition services.
- Expand, support and improve the quality and range of resources that meet the developmental and special needs of children in the Minister's care, including residential services on reserve. Ensure this continuum reduces the need for high cost resources.
- Develop new foster homes through a recruitment campaign.
- Recruit an additional 20 workers to meet increased pressures in foster care, therapeutic foster care, private treatment and family supports.
- Continue partnerships with First Nations Child and Family Service agencies to support children in care to reconnect to their First Nations' communities.

What are we measuring?

The number of children in care of the Minister

Progress to date



Children can be placed in care of the Minister on a temporary or permanent basis if their parents are unable to care for them safely. Because children who grow up in care of the Minister frequently experience poorer life outcomes than children raised in their own families, it is appropriate to ensure that children are taken into care only when necessary.

In Saskatchewan, approximately two-thirds of children coming into care are of Aboriginal background. Some of these children are served by Department staff and resources, and others by staff from the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies. The number of children in care reported in this performance measure does not yet include children on-reserve who are brought into care under First Nations Child and Family Service agencies.

The number of children in care is affected by external demographic factors as well as social conditions and the incidence of problems such as addictions and mental health within families.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
The per cent of foster homes where practitioner level training has been completed	83% *[January – March 2006]*

An important aspect of quality service is having people who are highly trained and competent. Foster parenting requires a high level of skill, commitment and understanding that comes, in part, from training. The Department provides different levels of training for foster parents to help them work with children and youth, many of whom are dealing with challenging social and behavioural problems. Foster parents must develop competencies in protecting and nurturing children, meeting children's developmental needs, supporting the relationship between children and their natural families, and working with other professionals for the common well-being of the child. This performance measure shows the per cent of foster parents who have received training at a more advanced skill level than the base required of all foster parents, once they have been selected as a foster parent.

OBJECTIVE 3 *– Residential services provide the highest possible quality of life*

The Department maintains a variety of residential care arrangements for adults with disabilities, children and youth with emotional and behavioural problems, and seniors who needed various levels of supported care. All of the different living arrangements should meet the physical, social or developmental needs of their residents. The Department needs to ensure that all standards of care are appropriately met, and that the residential arrangements allow for people to continue to thrive and develop.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Develop a strategy to reduce the average home population at Valley View Centre from 28 to 25 to accommodate space requirements for an aging population.
- Develop a strategy to address declining professional staff (nurse) numbers ensuring provision of quality professional coverage at Valley View Centre.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Under development	Under development

OBJECTIVE 4 – People with disabilities live more independently and participate more fully in the economy and communities

People expect to live their lives with dignity and with little intrusion from public agencies. Where individuals are incapable of living independently, supports are needed. These supports must be provided in a manner that allows for as much independence in conducting one's life as possible. For most people, participating in the labour force is the major route to independence. This is the aim for all people, regardless of disability. The activities of the Department aim to normalize the conditions of people with disabilities and have them valued and contributing members of the community.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Expansion of crisis response services through the redesign of North View Home in Prince Albert and implementation of a crisis response program in Regina.
- Increase opportunities and supports for people with an intellectual disability by developing new or enhancing residential and day programs across the province.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
The percentage of persons with disabilities receiving employment supports or programs who obtain or maintain employment	43% *[March 2006]*

The Department works with employers, families and communities to help people with disabilities gain greater independence through employment. As part of the route to independence, people are supported in a variety of ways, including supported employment, individual support, and/or productivity support.

This measure reports the percentage of people with disabilities who have participated in an employment service or program and who have obtained and maintained employment. In 2004-05, the number of people with disabilities participating in employment and support programs was 3,664. The number of people with disabilities obtaining or maintaining employment as a result of these programs was 1,265.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
The number of persons with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View Centre to community residential alternatives	6 *[2005-06]* 2 *[2004-05]*

Movement of residents from Valley View Centre to the community is a measure of effectiveness of efforts to develop family and community supports that support community inclusion. Over time, the higher functioning individuals have already left Valley View for community placements around the province. This means that those now being placed from Valley View have more severe impairments and require a greater number and intensity of supports in order to make the transition from Valley View into the community.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
The number of persons with intellectual disabilities living in own residences with minimal life skills support through Community Living funded supportive living programs	450 *[March 2006]* 431 *[March 2005]*

Independence and choice are considered important aspects of quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. This measure indicates success at developing supports that provide people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to live independently in their communities.

It measures the total number of people living in their own residence and supported through Community Living Division supportive living programs.

OBJECTIVE 5 – People have safe and affordable homes that promote strong communities and neighbourhoods

Good quality housing that is safe and affordable has health, economic and social benefits. Stable housing positively influences a person's ability to work, and, at a broader level, the housing sector provides employment and stimulates economic activity. An adequate supply of quality housing gives people choices. Stable housing is a factor in crime prevention and neighbourhood development. Where people have housing that is safe, secure and affordable, access to community-based services is enhanced, and community life is strengthened.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Increase the supply of quality, affordable housing available for moderate income families, persons with a disability, seniors and other vulnerable households.
- Rehabilitate existing affordable housing stock for low-income households.
- Improve the energy efficiency of homes occupied by low-to-moderate income households.
- Create home ownership opportunities for moderate-income households with dependents to improve family stability and independence.
- Increase funding for affordable housing initiatives targeted to northern communities and inner city neighbourhoods of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford.
  - ~ Create new affordable rental and homeownership units for low to moderate income families and youth at risk.
  - ~ Provide rent subsidies for 300 very low income families and youth at risk.
  - ~ Increase participation of inner city and northern youth in housing and repair projects through expansion of training in the trades.

What are we measuring?

The number of affordable housing units developed under the Centenary Affordable Housing Program (CAHP) and other housing programs

Progress to date

1,205 units were developed through the Centenary Affordable Housing Program, the Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program, the Accelerated Homeownership and Repair Program, and the Rental Purchase Option. The majority of units (1,124) were developed under CAHP.
[At March 31, 2006]

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation funds the construction of rental and homeowner units and the acquisition and/or renovation of existing buildings for affordable housing. One of the major programs used for these purposes is the Centenary Affordable Housing Program. Stable

and affordable housing can enable people to participate in the labour force by increasing their financial savings and security of tenure. Stable housing may also provide contacts and networks of support within a community. It also facilities skills training and education through the availability of increased financial resources and a safe and secure environment where parents can focus on learning.

This measure is the total number of housing units constructed and under construction by CAPH and other programs for the current fiscal year.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
The number of households assisted through repair, renovation, and adaptation programs	1,702 commitments for repair and adaptation grants *[At March 31, 2006]*

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has several types of repair programs aimed at low-income homeowners, landlords, seniors and persons with disabilities. Repair programming is an important part of the provincial housing strategy to improve the quality of housing in the province. Some repair programs are cost-shared with the federal government, while others are fully funded by the province. Besides repairing accommodations, the programs can be used to make homes accessible for disabled or older residents, enabling them to live independently within their neighbourhood. Better quality housing promotes residential stability, decreases transience, and leads to more stable and cohesive communities.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
The per cent of homes that upgraded to safety standards after initially failing the housing inspection for the Saskatchewan Housing Rental Supplement (SHRS)	In the year ending March 31, 2006, 67% of applications passed inspection and 33% of homes failed initial inspection. 40% were subsequently upgraded upon re-inspection. *[April 2005 to March 2006]*

Some low-income families are unable to initially benefit from the Saskatchewan Housing Rental Supplement, if the condition of their residence does not meet a minimal health and safety test. The Department provides financial assistance to rental property owners for minor repairs that will bring their properties to a standard that would enable the tenants to qualify for assistance through the SRHS. These repairs are intended to address immediate health and safety issues. The measure addresses the number of homes that are safer and that, by qualifying for the SRHS, are also more affordable for the low-income tenant.

The Department puts in place many actions to increase accountability and efficiency across all program areas, and that serve to improve the quality of our programs. The following objective supports both department goals, since improvements in our ability to effectively administer and deliver quality programs will yield better social and economic outcomes for all program participants.

OBJECTIVE – All programs and services improve client outcomes, are financially accountable, and are delivered effectively

Underlying the Department's goals is the need to ensure that all programs are effective, are based on available evidence, and are delivered in an effective and efficient manner. Community Resources emphasizes quality in all its programs. This objective describes some of the ways in which programs must meet quality expectations. Achieving good client outcomes is a paramount test of a program. As well, programs must be publicly accountable and must be delivered within a system that supports efficient delivery to the people who are eligible and in need of the Department's services.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Dispose of non-productive public housing units to free resources for deeper-needs households.
- Enhance operations in the Contact Centre to meet the new client service targets.
- Develop and implement a client-focused training strategy for front-line staff, that enhances awareness and knowledge of individual disabilities, characteristics and circumstances.
- Strengthen processes to ensure that client benefit payments are made accurately and only to eligible persons.
- Full implementation of third party phase of CBO investment plan to enhance wages of staff and alleviate pressures on operating costs.
- Implement a new vocational program funding standard and phase in new standards as resources are allocated.
- Strengthen the relationship with the 18 First Nations Child and Family Services agencies by assessing and building their capacity around finance, human resources, accountability, quality management and service delivery.
- Respond to the independent reviews of the Children's Advocate and Provincial Auditor related to the Oyate Safe House and services for sexually exploited children and to recommendations related to critical case incidents.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Income assistance benefit measures	Under development

With over 20,000 individuals receiving income assistance from the Department, there is a challenge in ensuring that all applications and benefit assessments are error free. When errors do occur, they can be the result of inaccurate information supplied by the participant, or of a worker miscalculating a benefit. The measure will reflect the Department's internal controls in ensuring that payments are based on current reliable information and that human error is minimized.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Contact Centre service measures	Under development

The Contact Centre is a telephone-based call centre that handles initial requests for financial benefits. For some programs, such as the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement and the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement, all contact with clients is through the centre. For other programs, such as SAP, the centre refers clients to workers in their local region who assist in developing a case plan. This new measure will reflect the efficiency and appropriateness with which callers' inquiries and applications are handled and processed by Contact Centre representatives.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of children in care files with an updated Child Assessment and Development Plan (CADP) completed within 120 days	77% *[January – March 2006]*

When a child first comes into care, workers complete an initial assessment and plan for services. As more information on the situation emerges, a further, more detailed assessment is made and plans for the future are developed. The time it takes to update plans depends on several factors, including the number of people involved in the case plan and the number of services that need to be co-ordinated in order to carry out the case plan. This measure reflects the timeliness of these more detailed plans. It is based on a sample of case files conducted around the province and is done as part of the Department's quality improvement activities.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Per cent of child protection investigations that are fully completed within 15 days of report	74% *[January – March 2006]*

The Department receives over 30,000 referrals to child protection each year. Not all of these require investigation. However, where there is sufficient information as to suggest that a child is at risk of abuse or serious neglect, a file is opened and an investigation begins. The performance measure is a reflection of timeliness of service. It measures those referrals which were serious enough to launch an investigation and where that investigation could be completed within 15 days of reporting. All investigations start within days of the report to the Department. The length of time an investigation takes can vary according the complexity of the case, the number of people involved, and the location in the province. The measure is based on a sample of files conducted around the province and is done as part of the Department's quality improvement activities.

For More Information

Further information on the Department's organization, legislation, staff, policies, programs, and research may be obtained from the Department's website at www.cr.gov.sk.ca.

Additional information may also be obtained by contacting:

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